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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia announced that Antonio Goddard, age 27, of Portsmouth, Virginia, was sentenced today in federal court in Norfolk to 180 months imprisonment for obstruction of justice and possession of a firearm in furtherance of crack cocaine trafficking. Goddard's co-defendant, Christopher Allen Lunceford, age 21, also of Portsmouth, Virginia, was sentenced to 210 months imprisonment on April 2d for crack cocaine conspiracy and being a felon in possession of a firearm. The two armed drug dealers were indicted together on drug trafficking and firearms charges, as well as Goddard's obstruction charge, and both entered guilty pleas.

The federal charges initially arose out of a shooting between two vehicles on Victory Boulevard about midnight, April 7, 2002, involving Lunceford. Portsmouth authorities referred the case for possible federal prosecution under Project Safe Neighborhoods/EXILE. During the federal investigation, Goddard threatened a government witness. The federal investigation also developed the evidence of drug trafficking.

Project EXILE, a program of the President's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), is a nationwide initiative that targets armed criminals for prosecution in federal court for possession or use of firearms in violation of federal laws. Since its inception in Hampton Roads, over 1,205 firearms have been seized, over 676 armed criminals have been convicted, and the average sentence has been over 113 months each.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and an ATF Task Force officer from the Portsmouth Police Department, and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James A. Metcalfe.

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